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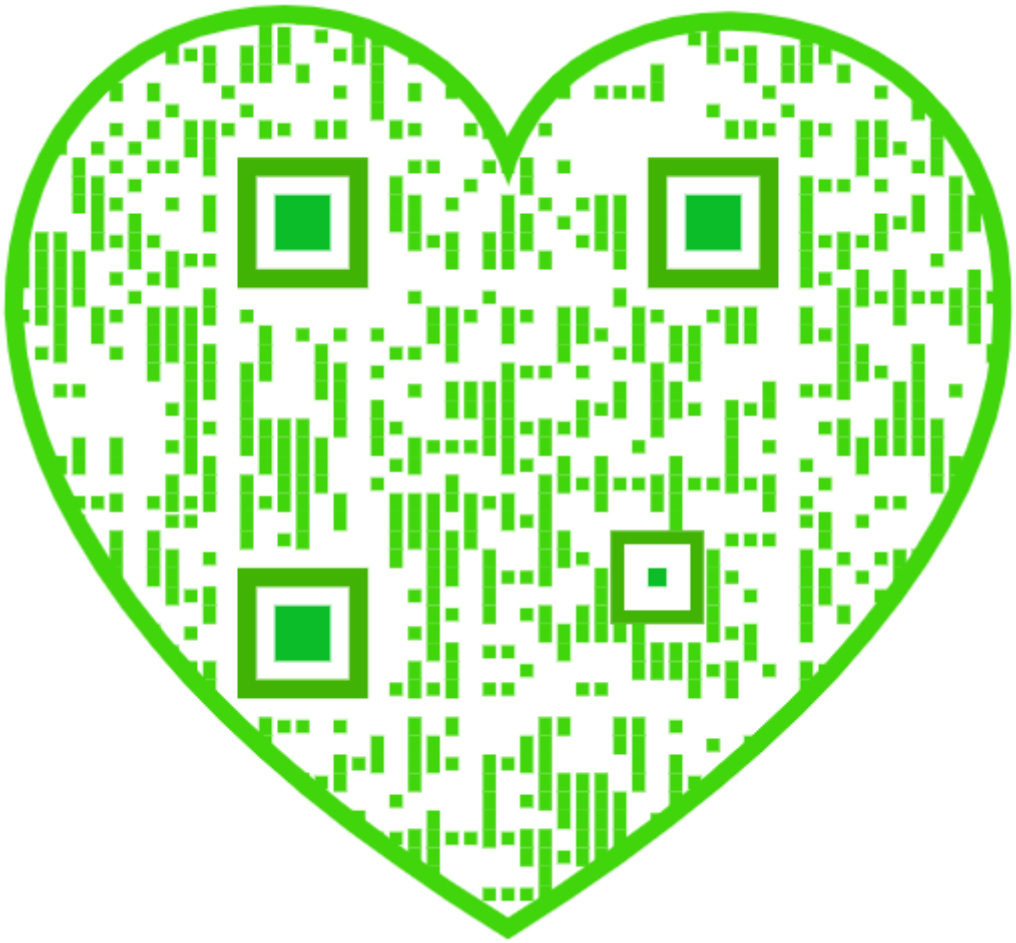

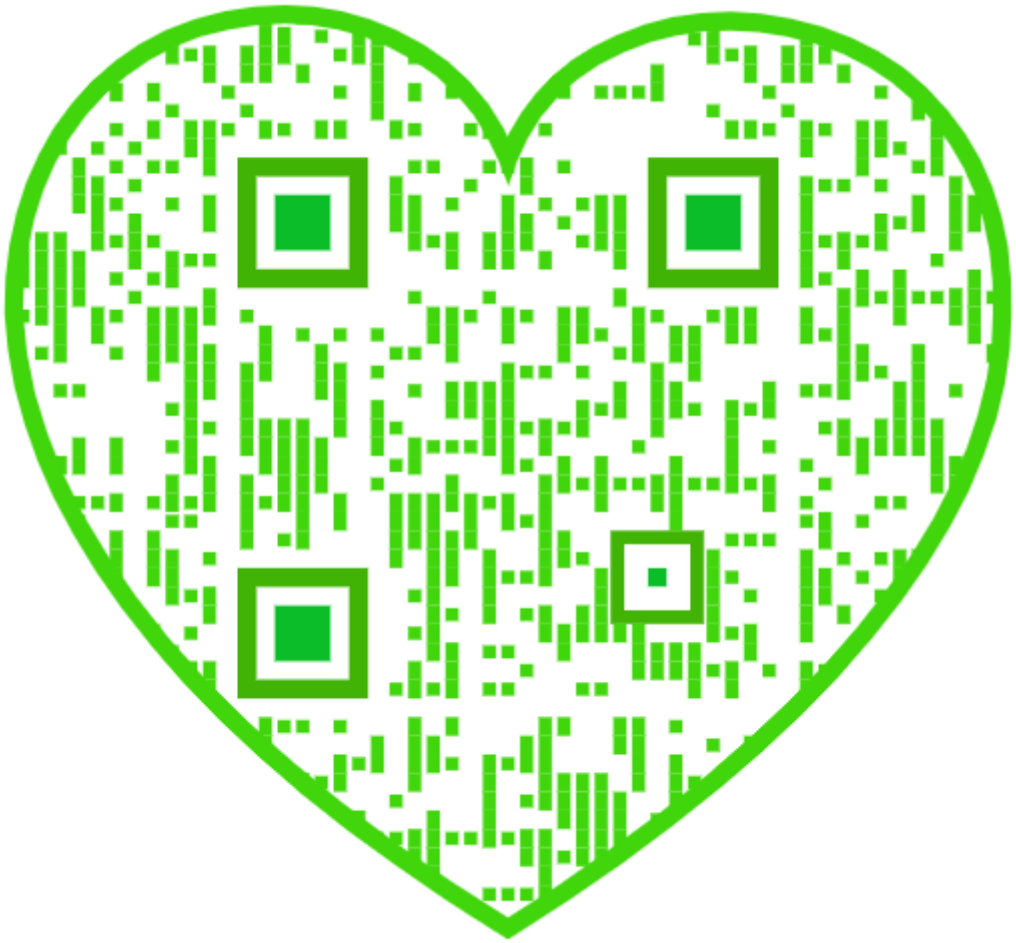

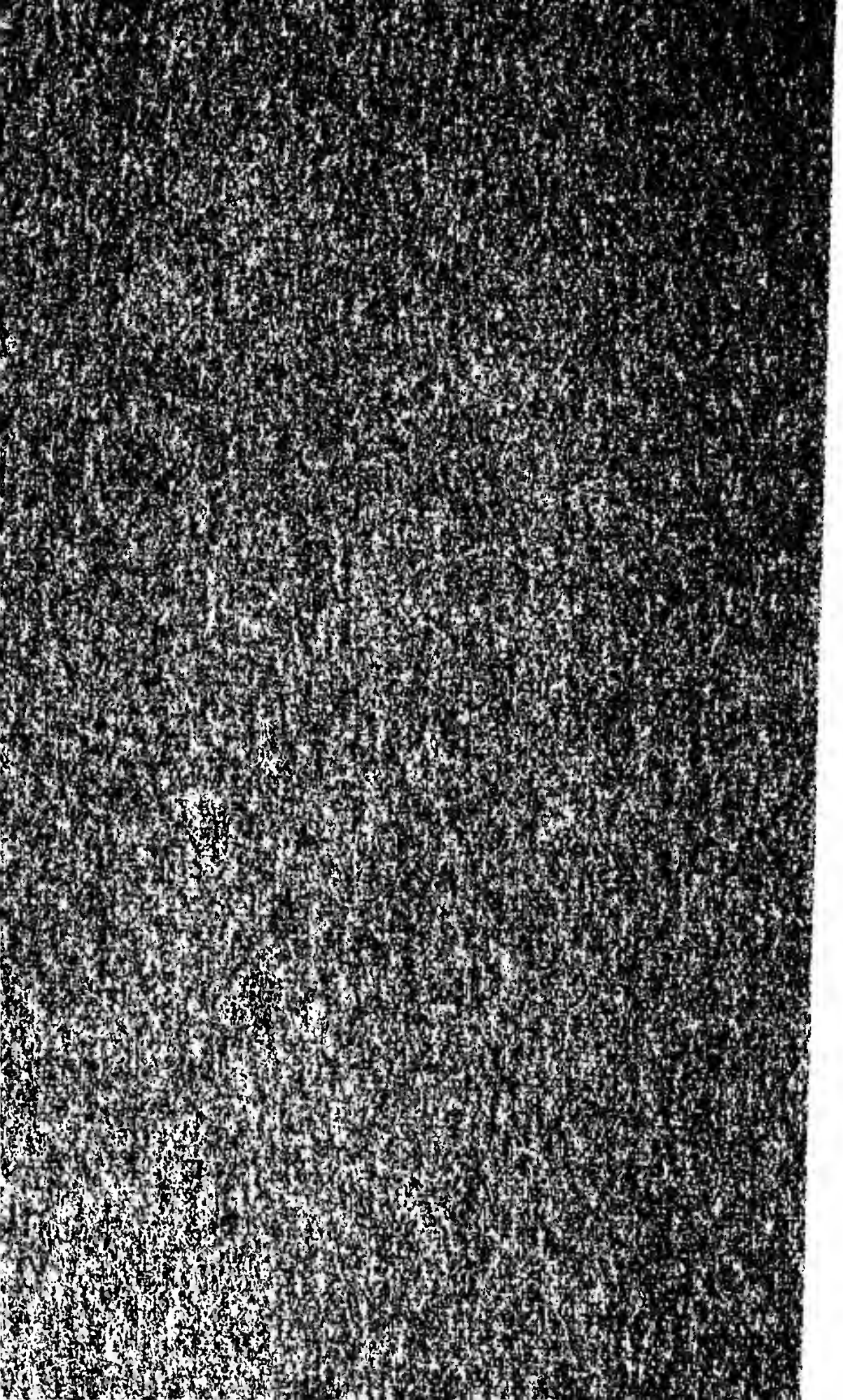

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SCHNEIDER VON GROOT'S

* Christmas * Dream. *

BY

"BROADBRIM"

PE 1591
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It was Christmas Eve, of all nights in the year,
And old Schneider Von Groot, who was full of good cheer,
Was seeking his home, like a jolly old elf,
And was singing a drinking song all to himself,
Of the glories of beer, and of schapps, and of wine,—
Of the draught that makes mortal clay feel so divine,—
Of the drink that drowns sorrow, misfortune and care—
Before which life's ills vanish into thin air.
He sat down by the wayside; his pipe he pulled out;
And he filled it, and lit it, and giving a shout,
He lay back on the bank as he puffed away care—
For he felt not the chill of the frosty night air;
But gently and peacefully sank into rest,
And enjoyed for the time the sweet sleep of the blest.

He was soon into dreamland, and the first thing he saw
Was a queer little elf with a book of the law.
The page it lay open, and what do you think
Was the law? It was written that all men should drink.
Not water or milk, but the strongest of schnapps;
Such as Dutchmen for ages have used for night caps.
The schnapps flowed in rivers. Each man could afford
Every day in the year to get drunk as a lord.
The schnapps it cost nothing on land or on sea,
And says Schneider Von Groot, "it's the country for me.
"I'll never get sober, but always keep tight,
And I'll drink like a fish from the morning till night."

And while he was speaking, a little old chap.
Who looked then as though he'd just woke from a nap,
Climbed up on his face and sat down on his nose,
And two little demons were perched on his toes.
One got in each ear, and one sat in each eye;
And no matter how much he might struggle or try,
They would not shake off, but they stuck fast as glue,
And then he discovered the villainous crew
Were all drunk as pipers, and ready to fight,
And poor Schneider Von Groot was all trembling with fright
When the battle began, and he wished himself back
With the old Burgomaster, Von Gilder Von Schack.

The fiends bound him with wythes of the willow and fir ;
And they tied him so fast that the man couldn't stir.
So they struggled and fought till the wounded and dead
On his body lay thick from his heels to his head.
And though thousands were slaughtered, the ranks were supplied
By new thousands who fought for the men who had died.
And the battle raged hot, till the dark clouds of night
Brought peace to Von Groot at the close of the fight.

While Von Groot lay and thought if he ever should see
Frau Von Groot and the children by old Zuyder Zee,
A little green imp with a bright, gleaming knife,
Jumped up on his breast, and he thought that his life
Was sure come to an end ; but the little green man
To cut all the wythes that had bound him began ;
And before he as much as " I thank you " could say,
The imp cut his stick and then bounded away.

Von Groot then got up, and when looking around
Saw the dead that lay scattered about on the ground,
And he said to himself, " I should just like to know
The cause of this slaughter." A voice from below
Cried hoarsely, " It's schnapps, and the blackness of hell
" All its murders, its crimes and its sorrows can tell."
Then the earth shook beneath him with thunderous raps,
And a chorus of demons yelled, " schnapps ! murder ! schnapps ! "

While he looked in the sky he saw floating afar
An angel who sat in a rich golden car,
And who guided a beautiful butterfly team.
She was fair as a lily and bright as a dream,
And she said to Von Schneider, "my friend, take a ride.
Just jump into my car and sit down by my side.
There is nobody here, my dear friend, but ourselves,
And I'll bear you away to the land of the elves."

As Von Groot obeyed quickly, they rose to the sky,
And the beautiful car through the air seemed to fly.
And at last in the distance what should he behold
But beautiful mountains all crimson and gold—
Fair fields and rich meadows, where fat gentle kine
Reposed in the shade of the sheltering vine.
The fields they were golden with ripe waving wheat,
And the odor of flowers rich, balmy and sweet,
Lulled the senses to soft and delicious repose,
And the sounds of sweet music around them arose.
He listened and wondered, and then said "perhaps
There is something to drink here that's better than schnapps."

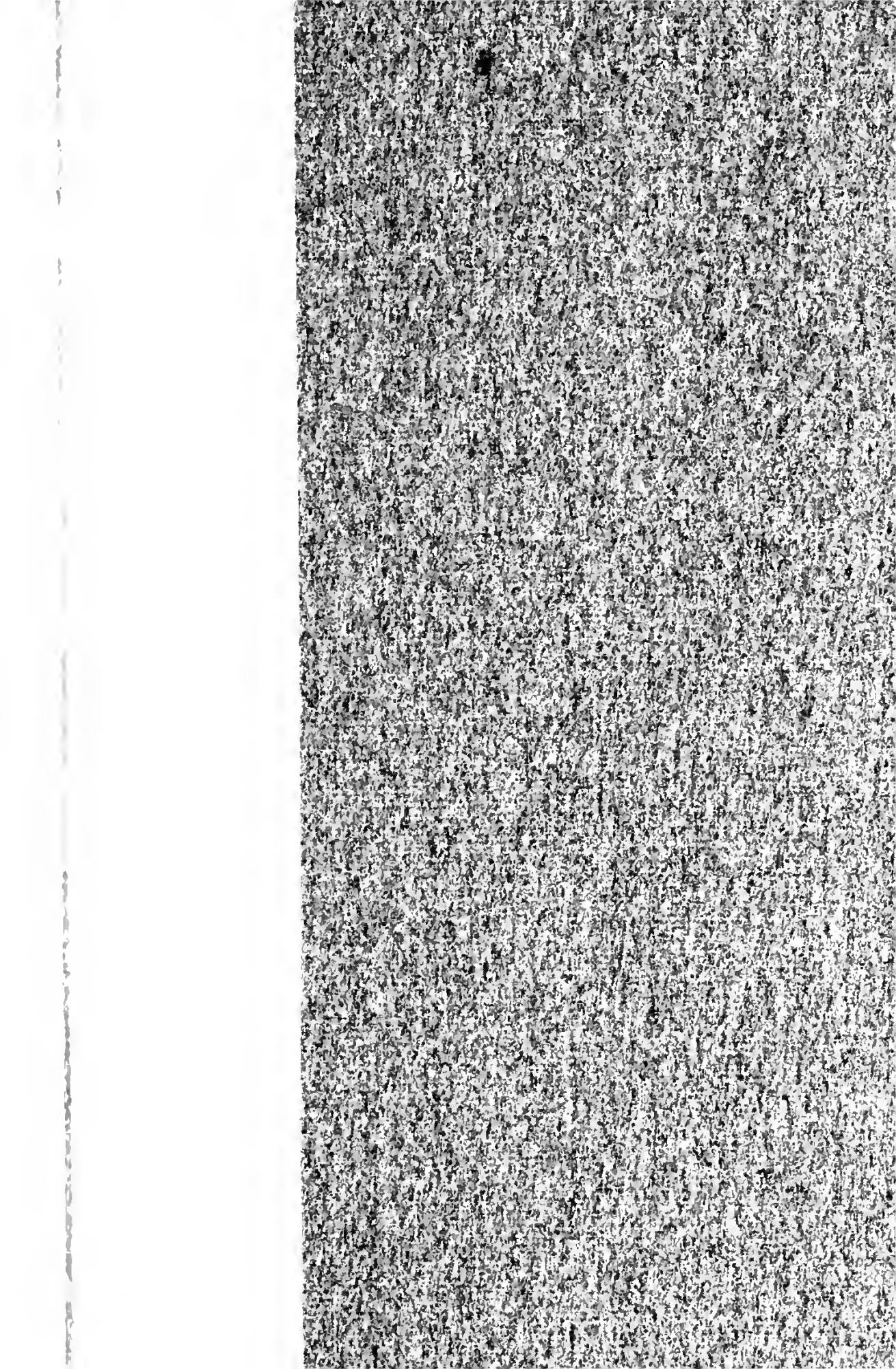
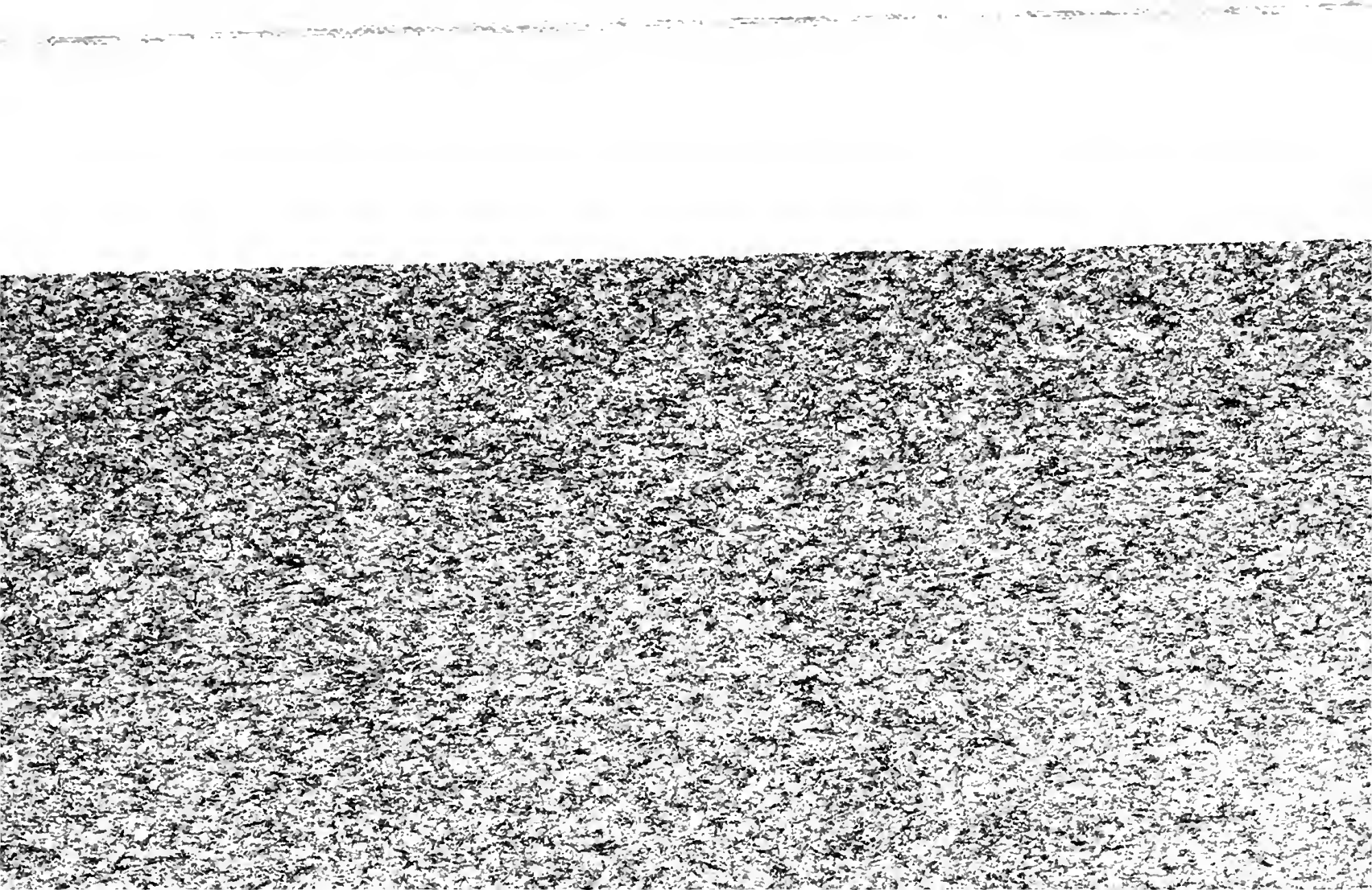
"Oh, yes," said the angel, "come hither with me.
And a drink that is better than schnapps you shall see.
It flows from a rock here all limpid and pure,
And most of life's ills it will certainly cure.

It will bring you no sorrow, misfortune or grief.
Just try it, Von Groot, and it is my belief,
After testing its virtue, my dear friend, perhaps
You'll admit there is something much better than schnapps."

In a goblet of gold the elixer was brought.
He grasped it and drank it. and certainly thought
That new life through his nerves and his heart seemed to thrill.
"Drink, drink," said the angel, "don't fear; drink your fill.
Behind this elixir there are no mishaps.
You'll find it, Von Schneider, much better than schnapps."

There was then a loud clang. and just judge his surprise,
As Von Groot sat there wondering and rubbing his eyes:
And Von said to himself, "now, it really don't seem
What I've passed through to-night can be only a dream."
The soft Christmas chimes then rang out loud and clear,
Like a sweet benediction saying "be of good cheer;
Be a man. drink no schnapps. and go home to your wife—
Stick to water. my boy. for the rest of your life.
The little green imps that you saw here last night
Were all made of schnapps and I hope that the fright
That they gave you will save you for ever and aye."
"Oh, yes," says Von Schneider, "to schnapps now good-bye."

He rose from the bank; he was shivering with cold,
And he felt like a mummy a thousand years old.
He thought of Frau Groot and his dear little boys;
So he got a big basket of candies and toys,
And he hurried home quick to his dear little wife.
She kissed him and hugged him, and said "my dear life,
Where have you been all night?" And he said, "Santa-Claus."
She replied, "say no more, my dear husband, because
You've been drinking, you know." And he answered, "perhaps
Just one drink too much, my dear angel, of schnapps.

"I've passed a bad night, and I certainly think
That schnapps, wife, is not just the best thing to drink.
It is Christmas day, and at least for one year,
Or until the next Christmas chimes you shall hear,
I'll drink no more schnapps." On the lips of his wife
He imprinted a kiss. For the rest of his life
He was sober and merry, and each Christmas time,
As he heard the sweet sounds of the holiday chime,
He remembered his dream, and the terrible fright
That he got from his schnapps on that Christmas night.

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